Amendments to the Drawings

I Please amend FIG. 1 of the drawings as follows:

(1) Add numeral 13 and associated lead line to illustrate the interlocking means on the outer surface of the tubular bearing carrier insert 14.

(2) Add numeral 15 and associated lead line to illustrate the outer race 15 of the bearing 16.

II Please amend FIG. 2 of the drawings as follows:

(1) Add numeral 13 and associated lead line to illustrate the interlocking means on the outer surface of the tubular bearing carrier insert 14.

(2) Add numeral 15 and associated lead line to illustrate the outer surface of the bearing 16.

(3) Move numeral 16 and associated lead line to more clearly illustrate the bearing 16.

The above amendments to the drawings are graphically illustrated on the newly amended FIGS. 1 and 2 as shown on revised drawing sheet which accompanies this amendment..

Remarks

This application is submitted in response to the Official Action mailed September 15, 2006.

Review and reconsideration of this application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-8, 13-17, 20-28, 30 and 31 remain in this application.

The specification has been amended to provide support for certain features presented in the claims. No new matter has been entered by this amendment.

I Election/Restriction

1. In regard to the election/restriction requirement, applicant previously elected claims 1-23 directed to an idler pulley. Non-elected claims 24-26 were withdrawn.

II Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) for not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. The examiner alleges that it appears that what is being disclosed as a bearing member is a race that is frictionally engaged with the insert.

2. Applicant submits that the bearing member is clearly denoted in FIG. 1 by the numeral 16 and, perhaps, somewhat less clearly denoted in FIG 2 by numeral 16. In order to clarify FIG. 2, applicant has now relocated numeral 16 to more clearly denote the bearing member. Also new numeral 15 has been added to define the outer race 15 of the bearing member 16.

The examiner further states that claims 20-21 and 30 recite the central hub including a

locating means and in claims 22 and 30, the locating means is a profile or detent. However, the drawings do not show the hub (14) having any detent or a profile.

Applicant has amended claim 20 to replace "central hub" with "inner surface of said tubular insert" as the member which includes the locating means. This amendment is supported by FIGS. 1 and 2, and by the specification at page 3, second full paragraph.

In regard to claims 22 and 30, applicant submits that claim 22 is directed to a tubular bearing carrier insert which is knurled, splined or contains holes to provide a rough surface for enhancing interlock between said tubular bearing carrier insert and said pulley main body. This is different from the locating means of claims 20-21. The examiner will note that FIGS. 1 and 2 have been amended to include numeral 13 to show the interlocking means 13 which is described in the second full paragraph on page 13.

In regard to claim 30, applicant has amended claim 30 to delete any reference to the locating means which is described in claim 23 from which claim 30 depends...Also claim 30 has been amended to better describe the interlocking means as being on the surface of the tubular metal bearing carrier insert.

A corrected drawing sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) is submitted simultaneously herewith.

III Claim Objections

3. Claims 20-21 are objected to because claim 20 is dependent from a canceled claim.

Applicant's Response to Claim Objections

3. Applicant has amended claim 20 to change the dependency thereof from claim "19" to

"claim "1".

IV Rejection of Claim 30 – 35 USC 112

4. Claim 30 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The examiner alleges that in claim 30, "said tubular shell insert" and "tubular shell insert" lack antecedent basis.

Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claim 30 – 35 USC 112

4. In view of the above amendments to claim 30 wherein the terms " tubular shell member" and "tubular shell insert" have been amended to read, "metal bearing carrier insert" and "metal bearing carrier insert", respectively, this rejection can now be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 5, applicant submits that this rejection can be withdrawn in view of the above amendments to claims 3 and 5.

V Rejection of Claims 1 and 22 - 35 U.S.C. § 103

5. Claims 1 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCutchan, Jr. (4,468,210) in view of Avery (1,560,524). The examiner alleges that McCutchan, Jr. discloses a pulley having a body (80), and a bearing insert carrier insert (86) forming a central hub which has inner and outer circumferential surfaces, and housing a bearing member (85), and the outer race of the bearing is circumferentially adjacent the inner circumferential surface of the bearing. The examiner also alleges that McCutchan, Jr. also discloses the coated section between the insert and the polymeric body to assist in the bonding of the polymeric body to the pulley. McCutchan, Jr. fails to disclose the coating comprises zinc that

is fixedly adhered to the insert. Avery discloses a pulley (see fig. 1) comprising a polymeric body (28) a metal part and a zinc allow coating (20) between the polymeric body and the metal part such that the polymeric body is molded to the zinc alloy coating in order to achieve great friction co-action and reduce rust between the rubber material and the metallic body. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the device of McCutchan, Jr. so that the coating is zinc in view of Avery in order to achieve great friction co-action and reduce rust between the rubber material and the metallic body.

With respect to claim 22, the examiner alleges that McCutchan, Jr. discloses a knurled section (Figs. 13-14, item 30).

Applicant's Response to Rejection of claims 1 and 22 – 35 USC 103

5. Regarding the rejection of claims 1, 19 and 22 over the patent to McCutchan, Jr. in view of the patent to Avery, applicant submits that McCutchan, Jr. teaches an idler pulley which includes a bearing assembly 81 and a metal hub 83. The metal hub 83 of McCutchan, Jr. may appear to be similar to the tubular bearing insert of the present invention; however, in the present invention, the tubular bearing insert is directly adjacent the molded polymeric pulley body. In fact, the tubular bearing insert is integrally formed with the molded pulley body in the present invention. McCutchan, Jr., on the other hand, requires the pulley body to be an annular metal body 86, which includes an annular web 87, which terminates at one end in a cylindrical axially extending annular flange 88, which telescopically mounts body 86 on hub 83. The web 87 terminates at the other end in an axially extending cylindrical wall 89. Specifically, what McCutchan, Jr. teaches is a pulley body formed of sheet metal and a multi-V-groove belt-receiving formation of molded plastic on the outer cylindrical wall portion of the metal body. The idler pulley of the present invention does not employ an annular metal body which is an additional component in the manufacture of the pulley. The additional component not only requires an additional cost for the component, but it also requires an additional step in the

manufacture of the pulley. Furthermore, the more components present in the pulley, the more complicated the component and the more likelihood of failure of one of the components. Independent claims 1 and 23 have been amended wherein the term "comprising" has been replaced with "consisting essentially of". The present claims now preclude the presence of an additional annular metal body having a web which terminates at one end on a cylindrical axially extending flange which telescopically mounts the body on the hub as taught by McCutchan, Jr. The other embodiments of McCutchan, Jr. are directed to drive pulleys, which are fixedly mounted to appropriate vehicle accessories.

The examiner further states that McCutchan, Jr. disclose the coated section between the insert and the polymeric body to assist in the bonding of the polymeric body to the pulley, but fails to disclose that the coating comprises zinc that is fixedly attached to the insert.

Applicant submits that McCutchan, Jr. does not teach a coating applied to the metal wall to assist in bonding of the plastic V-groove formations to the metal wall. What McCutchan, Jr. teaches is applying a knurl to the metal to accomplish this. Furthermore, the bonding of the polymeric body to the pulley creates a drive pulley wherein a bearing and a bearing insert, such as in the present invention, are not employed.

With respect to claim 22, the examiner states that McCutchan, Jr. discloses the knurled section (30). Applicant submits that claim 22 is a dependent claim defining a preferred limitation of the broad claims of the present invention and, since it is believed that the present invention as defined by claims 1 and 19 is allowable, it is believed that dependent claim 22 is also allowable.

Avery is cited as disclosing a pulley comprising a polymeric body and a metal part and a zinc alloy coating between the polymeric body and the metal part such that the polymeric body is molded to the zinc alloy in order to achieve great friction co-action and reduce rust between the rubber material and the metallic body. Actually, what Avery teaches is an alloy of copper, antimony and zinc (preferably containing approximately 62 $^{2}/_{3}$ % copper, 33 $^{1}/_{3}$ % zinc and 3 and

a fraction percent antimony to the rim of the pulley or the metal sleeve of the belt-engaging portion of the pulley. Therefore, Avery does not teach applying zinc to a hub and a pulley body.

Applicant contends that present claim 1 and 22 are not obvious over either McCutchan, Jr. or Avery taken individually or in combination with each other. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection of claims 1 and 22 over McCutchan, Jr. in view of Avery be withdrawn.

VI Rejection of Claims 1-5, 8, 13-14, 15-17, and 22 – 35 USC 103

6. Claims 1-5, 8, 13-14, 15-17 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102b) as being unpatentable over Speer (4,366,609) in view of Avery (1,560,524). The examiner alleges that Speer discloses an idler pulley comprising a moldable polymeric body (24), with a pulley receiving peripheral shaped surface (20), a tubular insert (12) manufactured from a rigid metal, the insert forming a central hub alone the perpendicular axis of the pulley body, the hub having an inner circumferential surface and an outer circumferential surface. The surface of the insert is coated by being roughened or by sandblasting. Speer does not disclose that the coated surface is coated with brass or zinc. Avery discloses a pulley (see fig.1) comprising a polymeric body (28), a metal part and a zinc alloy coating (20) between the polymeric body and the metal part such that the polymeric body is molded to the zinc alloy coating in order to achieve great friction co-action and reduce rust between the rubber material and the metallic body. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the device of Speer so that the coating is zinc in view of Avery in order to achieve great friction co-action and reduce rust between the rubber material and the metallic body.

With respect to claim 3, the examiner alleges that Speer discloses the pulley body is manufactured from a moldable polymeric material, which is phenolic resin.

With respect to claims 4-5, the examiner alleges that Speer discloses that the polymeric

can be a polyamide (col. 2, lines 34-55).

With respect to claims 13-14, the examiner alleges that Speer discloses the metal coating (18). The metal is coated before being formed in an aluminum sleeve (46).

With respect to claims 15-17, the examiner alleges that Speer discloses the claimed invention (col. 2, lines 56-67).

With respect to claim 22, the examiner alleges that Speer clearly discloses the locking portion (26).

Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claims 1-5, 8, 13-14, 15-17, and 22 – 35 USC 103

6. Regarding the rejection of claims 1-5, 8, 13-14, 15-17 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer (4,366,609) in view of Avery (1,560,524), applicant contends that Speer does not teach an idler pulley, but instead teaches a drive pulley having a cup-shaped metal hub having a plurality of mounting holes for mounting the pulley for rotation. There is no mention of a bearing in the Speer patent and, in deed; there is no bearing in the drive pulleys defined by Speer. In view of the amendment to claim 1 wherein the bearing member of claim 19 has been incorporated into claim 1, it is believed that independent claim 1 is not obvious over the teaching of Speer. . Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection over Speer be withdrawn.

Claim 2 has been canceled.

Regarding the rejection of claim 3, Speer is cited as disclosing that the pulley body is manufactured from a moldable polymeric material, which is a phenolic resin. Since it is believed that independent claim 1 is now allowable, dependent claim 3 which defines a further limitation of claim 1 is also considered to be allowable.

Regarding the rejection of claims 4-5, Speer is cited as disclosing that the polymeric material can be a polyamide. Since it is believed that claim 1 is allowable, dependent claims 4-5 are also considered to be allowable.

Regarding the rejection of claims 13-14, in view of Avery? The examiner suggests that the metal coating (18) is coated before forming in an aluminum sleeve (46). Applicant submits that the metal coating and the aluminum sleeve taught by Avery is on the belt facing section of the pulley and not between the hub and the pulley body. In any case, it is believed that independent claim 1 is now allowable and, since dependent claim 13-14 are simply further limitations of claim 1, such dependent claims 13-14 are also considered to be allowable. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection over Speer in view of Avery be withdrawn.

VII Rejection of Claims 6-7 – 35 USC 103

7. Claims 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of JP (02-202928). Speer fails to disclose the type of polyamide is nylon. It is well known in the art that nylon is an organic base in polyamide that produces high resistance to temperature and good resistant to abrasion. JP (02-202928) discloses that polyamides such as nylon 6, and nylon 12 are suitable because of their high melting point and highly crystalline structure. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the body of Speer so as to use a polyamide consisting of the group including nylon 6 or nylon 12 in view of JP (02-202928) in order to produce high temperature resistance and good resistant to abrasion.

Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claims 6-7 –35 USC 103

7. Claims 6-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view

of Avery as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of JP (02-202928). The examiner states that Speer fails to disclose the type of polyamide is nylon, but that it is well known in the art that nylon is an organic base in polyamide that produces high resistance to temperature and good resistance to abrasion. JP (02-202928) is cited as disclosing that polyamides such as nylon 6 and nylon 12 are suitable because of their high melting point and highly crystalline structure. Applicant contends that claims 6-7 are dependent claims which further limit independent claim 1. Since it is believed that claim 1 is allowable, dependent claims 4-5 are also considered to be allowable. Accordingly is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

VIII Rejection of Claim 8 – 35 USC 103

8. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery as applied to claim 1, and further in view of FR (1,595,346). Speer discloses the use of high-density polyethylene (col. 2, lines 51-55), the use of fibrous glass (col. 2, lines 54-55, which is glass fiber, but fails to disclose an adhesion promoter is of a group consisting of talc or mica. FR (1,595,346) discloses that it is known in the art to use talc or mica as reinforcing filler in moldable plastics so as to increase strength and produce good abrasion. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use talc or mica as a reinforcing agent in the moldable plastic of Speer as disclosed by FR (1,595,346 so as to increase strength and produce good abrasion.

Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claim 8 –35 USC 103

8. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery as applied to claim 1 and further in view of FR (1,595,346). Speer is cited as disclosing the use of high-density polyethylene and the use of fibrous glass, but fails to disclose an adhesion promoter selected from the group consisting of Talc and mica. FR (1,595,346) discloses that it is well known in the art to use Talc or mica as reinforcing adhesion promoters in moldable plastics to increase strength and produce good adhesion. Applicant contends that claim 8 is a dependent claims which further limits independent claim 1. Since it is believed that claim 1 is allowable,

dependent claim 8 is also considered to be allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

IX Rejection of Claims 20-21 – 35 USC 103

9. Claims 20-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCutchans, Jr. in view of Avery as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Hoffman et al. (4,046,432). McCutchan, Jr. discloses the claimed invention except for the hub including means for location the bearing member during assembly. Hoffman et al disclose a bearing member (23) fitted within a central hub, wherein the hub includes a location means (37/47/57), which is a detent that is allowed to lock the rotational movement of the bearing, retaining relative axial movement and to facilitate proper alignment between the bearing in the hub. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the pulley of Speer so as to include a location means in view of Hoffman et al in order to lock the rotational movement of the bearing, retaining axial movement and to facilitate proper alignment of the bearing in the hub.

Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claims 20-21 –35 USC 103

9. Claims 20-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCutchan, Jr. in view of Avery as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Hoffman et al. (4,046,432). The Examiner alleges that McCutchan, Jr. discloses the claimed invention except for the hub including means for locating the bearing member during assembly. Hoffman et al. disclose a bearing member (23) fitted within a central hub, wherein the hub includes a location means (37/47/57) which is a détente and is allowed to lock the rotational movement of the bearing, retaining relative axial movement and to facilitate proper alignment between the bearing and the hub. Applicant submits that claims 20-21 are dependent claims which further limit independent claim 1. Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the art, it is believed that dependent claims 20-21 are also allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this

rejection be withdrawn.

X Rejection of Claim 23 – 35 USC 103

10. Claim 23 as understood, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery, Hoffman and McCutchan, Jr., and Arai (5,797,819). Speer discloses the claimed invention as discussed above, but fails to disclose the zinc coating. Avery discloses a pulley (see fig.1) comprising a polymeric body (28), a metal part and a zinc coating (20) between the polymeric body and the metal part such that the polymeric body is molded to the zinc alloy coating in order to achieve great friction co-action and reduce rust between the rubber material and the metallic body. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the device of Speer so that the coating is zinc in view of Avery in order to achieve great friction co-action and reduce rust between the rubber material and the metallic body. In addition, Speer does not disclose a one or more bearing members locating means and a bearing member fitted in the hub. Hoffman discloses the bearing member locating means as discussed above in the rejection of claims 20-21. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the pulley of Speer so as to include a location means in view of Hoffman et al in order to lock the rotational movement of a bearing, retaining axial movement and to facilitate proper alignment of the bearing in the hub. In addition, Speer fails to disclose the bearing member, McCutchan, Jr. discloses the bearing member fitting in the hub as discussed above. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to fit a bearing member in the hub of Speer as disclosed in order to reduce friction. Furthermore, Speer fails to disclose the body containing silica. It is well known in the art that the inclusion of silica increases strength and wear resistance in order to increase strength without comprising the size and weight. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include silica to the body of the device of Speer in view of Arai in order to increase strength without comprising the size and weight

With respect to claim 28, Speer discloses the claimed invention.

With respect to claim 29, Avery discloses the claimed invention as discussed above.

With respect to claim 30, McCutchan, Jr., Avery, and Hoffman et al. disclose the bearing member as discussed above.

Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claim 23 –35 USC 103

10. Claim 23, as understood, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery, Hoffman et al., McCutchan, Jr. and Arai (5,797,819). The examiner alleges that Speer discloses the claimed invention, but fails to disclose the zinc coating. Avery is cited as disclosing a pulley comprising a polymeric body, a metal part and a zinc alloy coating between the metal part and the polymeric body. Speer fails to disclose one or more bearing member locating means and a bearing member fitted in the hub. Hoffman is cited as disclosing the bearing member locating means. In addition, Speer fails to disclose the bearing member. McCutchan, Jr. is cited as disclosing a bearing member fitted in the hub. Furthermore, Speer fails to disclose the body containing silica. Arai is cited as disclosing a pulley body containing silica. Applicant submits that claim 23 is a dependent claim which further limits independent claim 1. Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the art, it is believed that dependent claim 23 is also allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

As for claim 28, the examiner alleges that Speer discloses the claimed invention. Applicant submits that claim 28 is a dependent claim which further limits independent claim 1. Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the art, it is believed that dependent claim 28 is also allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

As for claim 29, the examiner alleges that Avery discloses the claimed invention. Claim

29 has been canceled, the contents of which have been incorporated into independent claim 23. . Accordingly this rejection can now be withdrawn.

As for claim 30, the examiner alleges that Avery and Hoffman (and McCutchan, Jr.?) disclose the bearing member. Applicant submits that claim 30 is a dependent claim which further limits independent claim 1. Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the art, it is believed that dependent claim 30 is also allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

XI Rejection of Claim 27 – 35 USC 103

11. Claim 27, as understood, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery, Hoffman and McCutchan, Jr. and Arai as applied to claim 23 above, and further in view of JP (02-202928). Speer fails to disclose that the type of polyamide is nylon. It is well known in the art that nylon is an organic base in polyamide that produces high resistance to temperature and good resistance to abrasion. JP (02-202928) discloses that polyamides such as nylon 6 and nylon 12 are suitable because of their high melting point and high crystalline structure. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the body of Speer so as to use a polyamide consisting of the group including nylon 6 or nylon 12 in view of JP (02-202928) in order to produce high temperature resistance, and good resistance to abrasion.

Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claim 27 – 35 USC 103

11. Claim 27, as understood by the examiner, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery, Hoffman and McCutchan, Jr. and Arai as applied to claim 23 above. and further in view of JP (02-202928). Speer fails to disclose the type of polyamide is nylon. JP (02-202928) is cited as disclosing that polyamides such as nylon 6 and nylon 12 are suitable because of their high melting points and highly crystalline structure. Applicant submits that claim 27 is a dependent claim which further limits independent claim 1.

Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the art, it is believed that dependent claim 27 is also allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

XII Rejection of Claim 31 – 35 USC 103

12. Claim 31, as understood, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery, Hoffman and McCutchan, Jr. and Arai as applied to claim 23 above, and further in view of FR (1,595,346). Speer discloses the use of high-density polyethylene; the use of fibrous glass, which is glass fiber. But fails to disclose that one of the modifier, filler, and reinforcing agent and adhesion promoter is of a group consisting of Talc or mica. FR (1,595,346) discloses that it is known in the art to use Talc or mica as reinforcing filler in moldable plastics so as to increase strength and produce good adhesion. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use Talc or mica as reinforcing agent in the moldable plastic of Speer as disclosed by FR (1,595,346) so as to increase strength and produce good adhesion. The type of polyamide is nylon. It is well known in the art that nylon is an organic base in polyamide that produces high resistance to temperature and good resistance to abrasion. JP (02-202928) discloses that polyamides such as nylon 6 and nylon 12 are suitable because of their high melting point and high crystalline structure. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the body of Speer so as to use a polyamide consisting of the group including nylon 6 or nylon 12 in view of JP (02-202928) in order to produce high temperature resistance, and good resistance to abrasion.

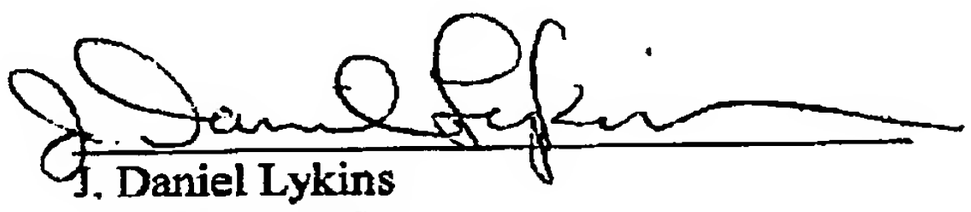
Applicant's Response to Rejection of Claim 31 – 35 USC 103

12. Claim 31, as understood by the examiner, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Speer in view of Avery, Hoffman and McCutchan, Jr. and Arai as applied to claim 23 above. and further in view of FR (5,797,819). Speer discloses the use of high-density polyethylene and the use of fibrous glass, but fails to disclose that one of the modifier, filler, and

reinforcing agent and adhesion promoter is of a group consisting of Talc and mica. FR (5,797,819) discloses that it is well known in the art to use Talc or mica as reinforcing filler in moldable plastics so as to increase strength and produce good abrasion. The type of polyamide is nylon. JP is cited as disclosing that polyamides such as nylon 6 and nylon 12 are suitable because of their high melting points and highly crystalline structure. Applicant submits that claim 27 is a dependent claim which further limits independent claim 1. Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the art, it is believed that dependent claim 27 is also allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn. Applicant submits that claim 31 is a dependent claim which further limits independent claim 1. Since claim 1 is believed to be allowable over the art, it is believed that dependent claim 31 is also allowable. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that this application is now in condition for allowance and an early indication thereof is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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